

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L FRANKFURT 003507

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/AGS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/22/2014

TAGS: [SOCI](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GM](#)

SUBJECT: BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG REMAINS SKEPTICAL OF
SCIENTOLOGISTS, SLOW TO CONSIDER OFFER OF DIALOGUE

REF: A. STATE 4493 B. BERLIN 1028 C. MUNICH 149

Classified By: Consul General Peter Bodde, Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Baden-Wuerttemberg (B-W) state authorities stand by their designation of the Church of Scientology (CoS) as an extremist sect and will continue official surveillance of CoS activities for the time being. State government representatives are still considering our request (per ref A) for direct dialogue between CoS and local authorities. Follow-up discussions indicate that achieving progress will be difficult and will require continued USG engagement. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) On March 11, Poloff delivered Ref A points to Hans-Werner Carlhoff, head of Baden-Wuerttemberg's Interministerial Working Group on Sects, regarding USG support for the Church of Scientology's request for an informal dialogue with German authorities. Carlhoff promised that the interministerial group would consider the USG demarche.

3. (C) Carlhoff pointed out "inaccuracies" in the latest USG Human Rights Report, namely that CoS is the only religion surveilled by B-W authorities (they monitor radical Islam as well) as well as the claim that CoS enjoys tax-exempt status in B-W (it does not). According to Carlhoff, a de facto exchange already exists between the Church of Scientology and B-W authorities: the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution (OPC) mails its periodic public reports on Scientology to CoS representatives, and the CoS frequently sends copies of Scientologist literature to the B-W government.

4. (C) During the demarche, Poloff made clear that the USG views the CoS issue as one of religious freedom. Carlhoff emphasized that Scientologists, like Satanists, are guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion under Article Four of Germany's constitution. He noted, however, that Scientology tactics differ from those of other proselytizing groups like Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, calling CoS methods questionable and sometimes intimidating. By way of example, he confided that the B-W CoS had forwarded the addresses of state politicians to CoS Europe headquarters for lobbying purposes, adding that CoS demonstrations in Stuttgart had featured a poster with his photo that said "Get Rid of Carlhoff". He also claimed local Scientologist protestors often can't speak German, hinting that the Church recruits foreigners (particularly from the former Yugoslavia) to bolster its turnout at rallies.

5. (C) Carlhoff said that while the CoS does have local adherents, the organization is so tightly centralized that the B-W government has difficulty identifying genuine local decision-makers to engage as dialogue partners. According to Carlhoff, local politicians who attempted to engage the CoS in dialogue in the past often found that the CoS used the meetings for propaganda purposes. He also downplayed B-W's December 12 court verdict upholding CoS's non-profit status, qualifying the decision by explaining that it dealt only with CoS's charitable operations and not the organization as a whole.

6. (C) During an April 19 follow-up discussion, Carlhoff confirmed that B-W government officials are still examining the CoS request for dialogue but hinted that it would be difficult to open a dialogue with an organization under state surveillance. We noted that (opportunities for) dialogue could occur at a variety of formal and informal levels and said that we would remain engaged on the issue.

COMMENT

7. (C) Skepticism and distrust of the Church of Scientology within the Baden-Wuerttemberg government are widespread, as evidenced by a December 2003 state parliament session in which various representatives harshly criticized the CoS and its activities. While the CoS has asked for dialogue with high-level B-W government figures (including Minister for Culture Annette Schavan and State Secretary Helmut Rao), we believe that any meetings likely to occur will be informal and low-level. Baden-Wuerttemberg representatives

acknowledge our status as an interested party, but the state's continued categorization of the CoS as a subversive organization makes a self-sustaining dialogue unlikely at the present time. Post will continue to engage B-W government representatives on the issue. END COMMENT.
BODDE